

CPC Minutes of June 15, 2010

A regular meeting of the City Plan Commission (CPC) was held on Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at 4:45 p.m. in the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) 4th Floor Auditorium, 400 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

OPENING SESSION

Call to Order: Chairman Durkee called the meeting to order at 4:48 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Steve Durkee, Vice Chairman Harrison Bilodeau, Andrew Cortes, Drake Patten and Bryan Principe.

Members Absent: Meredyth Church and Samuel Limiadi

Staff Present: Robert Azar and Choyon Manjrekar

Approval of meeting minutes for May 11th 2010: Mr. Cortes made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Patten. Mr. Bilodeau referenced City Council Referral 3326, which related to the City's waterfront and asked if the DPD was aware of a proposal to build a medical center on Allens Avenue. Mr. Azar said he had heard about the project but was not in contact with the applicant or developer as no formal plan submission or request for zoning relief had been made. Mr. Durkee said the issue was irrelevant in the context of approval of the minutes as there was no discussion of it at the meeting. Ms. Patten requested that a typographical error, which referred to Director of Long-Range Planning, Bonnie Nickerson as "Mr." instead of "Ms." in one instance be corrected. The amendment was accepted by Mr. Cortes. All voted in favor.

Providence Tomorrow

Downtown Plan and Knowledge District Study

Presentation of progress on the Downtown Plan and Knowledge District Study by the DPD to Commission members.

Mr. Azar spoke about the progress being made on the Downtown Plan. He said that the Knowledge District Study was focused on the Jewelry District area and hospital campuses, looking at the potential for growth in life science fields and infrastructure, utility improvements and zoning changes. He said that the study was being delayed because of funds being held up at the federal level and the DPD was working to complete the Downtown Plan by August. The estimated time window for the firm Perkins and Will to complete the Knowledge District study was 6 months, pending the grant of funds. Ms. Patten asked if the "Knowledge District" name for the study area was final. Mr. Azar said that the name could be changed. A discussion about the name ensued.

Referral 3328 – Petition to abandon the gangway located between Chalkstone Avenue and Lopez Street

Ms. Mary Joy Spencer represented the applicant. Mr. Azar introduced the project and said that the property neighboring the applicant had relinquished its rights to the gangway. Mr. Cortes made a motion seconded by Mr. Principe to recommend that the City Council approve the abandonment. All voted in favor.

Case No. 10-015 MI – 156 Blackstone Boulevard (Preliminary Plan Approval)

Mr. Azar introduced the project, to subdivide a lot of 12,186 SF in an R-1 zone into two lots measuring 6,644 SF and 5,542 SF with 60 and 50 feet of frontage respectively. Lots in the R-1 zone are required to measure a minimum of 6,000 SF, but footnote 3 of Section 304 of the Zoning Ordinance permits substandard sized lots that have a minimum of 50 feet of frontage. Although building envelopes were shown on the plan, no site design had been finalized. Ms. Kelley Morris representing the applicant said that the buildings were conceptual and that there was an existing building on the lot, which would be demolished. She requested that demolition of the building be made a condition of approval for the subdivision to proceed. Mr. Azar said that the new lot lines could not be established unless the building was demolished. He said that design regulations for new houses were included in the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Patten said she was concerned about the creation of new lots. Mr. Azar said that the subdivision met dimensional requirements and was in character with the rest of the neighborhood. A discussion ensued about possible development on the proposed lots. Mr. Azar said that a member of the DPD staff could speak to the applicant regarding design. Ms. Morris said she was open to that possibility. Mr. Durkee said that the discussion was only pertinent to the subdivision. Commission members discussed possible designs for the houses. Mr. Azar said that the application was only for subdividing the lot.

Ms. Patten made a motion to approve the subdivision seconded by Mr. Cortes. Mr. Bilodeau asked if the applicant could meet with the DPD to discuss house design. Ms. Morris said she would request her client to consider it. All voted in favor.

Adjournment

Mr. Principe made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mr. Bilodeau. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C. Manjrekar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Choyon Manjrekar,
Recording Secretary